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SACRED POEMS.

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SACRED POEMS.

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BY THE LATE

RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT GRANT.

Governor of Bombay.

A NEW EDITION.

9 x 0°26

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1868.

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PREFACE

TO

THE NEW EDITION.

THIS collection of Sacred Poems was originally published after the death of Sir Robert Grant by his brother the late Lord Glenelg. Former editions having been long since exhausted, it is thought by the sons and daughter of the late Sir Robert Grant that their republication would not be unacceptable to the lovers of Sacred Poetry; for, while some of these Poems have found a place in almost every collection of devotional verse, others of equal merit have remained comparatively unknown.

April, 1868.

NOTICE

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following Poems were composed at different periods of the Author's life.

Many of them have already appeared in print;—either in periodical publications, or in collections of sacred poetry. A few are now published for the first time.

Of those which are already known to the world copies have been multiplied; but they vary so much from the originals as well as from each other that it becomes necessary to present to the public a more correct and authentic version. In fulfilling this duty, I believe

that I render an acceptable service to the lovers of poetry and religion; and it will, I am persuaded, be found, that the additional poems, here inserted, are in no degree unworthy of those which have preceded them.

GLENELG.

LONDON: *June* 18, 1839.

SACRED POEMS.

I.

For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.—*Hebrews* iv. 15.

1

When gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark, and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who, not in vain,
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my wants, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

2

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To fly the good I would pursue,
Or do the sin I would not do—
Still He, who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour.

3

If wounded love my bosom swell,
Deceived by those I prized too well—
He shall His pitying aid bestow
Who felt on earth severer woe,
At once betrayed, denied, or fled,
By those who shared His daily bread.

4

If vexing thoughts within me rise,
And sore dismayed my spirit dies,
Still He who once vouchsafed to bear
The sickening anguish of despair,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry,
The throbbing heart, the streaming eye.

5

When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend,
Which covers what was once a friend,
And from his voice, his hand, his smile,
Divides me—for a little while;
Thou, Saviour, mark'st the tears I shed,
For Thou didst weep o'er Lazarus dead.

6

And O, when I have safely past
Through every conflict—but the last,
Still, still unchanging, watch beside
My painful bed—for Thou hast died;
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the latest tear away!*

* See Appendix.

II.

LITANY.

1

SAVIOUR, when in dust to Thee
Low we bow th' adoring knee;
When repentant, to the skies
Scarce we lift our weeping eyes:
O by all Thy pains and woe,
Suffered once for man below,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our solemn Litany!

2

By Thy helpless infant years,
By Thy life of want and tears,
By Thy days of sore distress
In the savage wilderness,

By the dread mysterious hour
Of the insulting tempter's power;
Turn, O turn, a favouring eye,
Hear our solemn Litany!

3

By the sacred griefs that wept
O'er the grave where Lazarus slept;
By the boding tears that flowed
Over Salem's loved abode;
By the anguished sigh that told
Treachery lurked within Thy fold;
From Thy seat above the sky
Hear our solemn Litany!

4

By Thine hour of dire despair,
By Thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn,
Piercing spear and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies
O'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble cry!
Hear our solemn Litany!

5

By Thy deep expiring groan,
By the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode
Held in vain the rising God!
O! from earth to heaven restored,
Mighty reascended Lord,
Listen, listen to the cry
Of our solemn Litany!

III.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.—*Psalm* lxxiii. 25.

1.

LORD of earth! Thy forming hand
Well this beauteous frame hath planned,
Woods that wave, and hills that tower,
Ocean rolling in his power,
All that strikes the gaze unsought,
All that charms the lonely thought,
Friendship—gem transcending price,
Love—a flower from paradise,
Yet, amidst this scene so fair,
Should I cease Thy smile to share,
What were all its joys to me?
Whom have I on earth but Thee?

2

Lord of heaven! beyond our sight
Rolls a world of purer light;
There, in love's unclouded reign,
Parted hands shall clasp again;
Martyrs there, and prophets high,
Blaze a glorious company;
While immortal music rings
From unnumbered seraph strings;
O! that world is passing fair;
Yet if Thou were absent there,
What were all its joys to me?
Whom have I in heaven but Thee?

3

Lord of earth and heaven! my breast
Seeks in Thee its only rest;
I was lost; Thy accents mild
Homeward lured Thy wandering child.
I was blind! Thy healing ray
Charmed the long eclipse away;
Source of every joy I know,
Solace of my every woe,

O if once Thy smile divine
Ceased upon my soul to shine,
What were earth or heaven to me?
Whom have I in each but Thee?

IV.

HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST.

1

FROM Olivet's sequestered seats,
What sounds of transport spread!
What concourse moves thro' Salem's streets,
To Sion's holy head?
Behold Him there in lowliest guise,
The Saviour of mankind!
Triumphal shouts before Him rise,
And shouts reply behind:
And, 'Strike,' they cry, 'your loudest string:
He comes—Hosanna to our King!

2

Nor these alone, that present train,
Their present King adored;
An earlier and a later strain
Extol the self-same Lord.
Obedient to His Father's will,
He came—He lived, He died;
And gratulating voices still
Before and after cried,
'All hail the Prince of David's line!
Hosanna to the Man divine!'

3

He came to earth: from eldest years,
A long and bright array
Of prophet bards and patriarch seers
Proclaimed the glorious day:
The light of heaven in every breast,
Its fire on every lip,
In tuneful chorus on they prest,
A goodly fellowship:
And still their pealing anthem ran,
'Hosanna to the Son of Man!'

4

He came to earth, thro' life He past
A man of griefs ; and lo,
A noble army following fast
His track of pain and woe ;
All decked with palms, and strangely bright,
That suffering host appears ;
And stainless are their robes of white,
Tho' steeped in blood and tears !
And sweet their martyr-anthem flows,
'Hosanna to the Man of Woes !'

5

From ages past descends the lay
To ages yet to be,
Till far its echoes roll away
Into eternity.
But oh ! while saints and angels high
Thy final triumph share,
Amidst Thy followers, Lord, shall I
Tho' last and meanest there,
Receive a place, and feebly raise
A faint hosanna to Thy praise ?

V.

Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest.—*Psalm* xliv. 12.

1

O SAVIOUR! whose mercy, severe in its kindness,
Has chastened my wand'rings and guided my way,
Adored be the power which illumined my blindness,
And weaned me from phantoms that smiled to betray.

2

Enchanted with all that was dazzling and fair,
I followed the rainbow—I caught at the toy;
And still in displeasure Thy goodness was there,
Disappointing the hope, and defeating the joy.

3

The blossom blushed bright, but a worm was below;—
The moonlight shone fair, there was blight in the beam;—
Sweet whispered the breeze, but it whispered of woe;—
And bitterness flowed in the soft-flowing stream.

4

So, cured of my folly, yet cured but in part,
I turned to the refuge Thy pity displayed;
And still did this eager and credulous heart
Weave visions of promise that bloomed but to fade.

5

I thought that the course of the pilgrim to heaven
Would be bright as the summer, and glad as the morn;
Thou showedst me the path—it was dark and uneven,
All rugged with rock, and all tangled with thorn.

6

I dreamed of celestial rewards and renown—
I grasped at the triumph which blesses the brave,
I asked for the palm-branch, the robe, and the crown,
I asked—and Thou showedst me a cross and a grave.

7

Subdued and instructed, at length, to Thy will,
My hopes and my longings I fain would resign;
O give me the heart that can wait and be still,
Nor know of a wish or a pleasure but Thine!

8

There are mansions exempted from sin and from woe,
But they stand in a region by mortals untrod;
There are rivers of joy, but they roll not below;
There is rest, but it dwells in the presence of God.

VI.

THE BROOKLET.

1

SWEET brooklet, ever gliding,
Now high the mountain riding,
The lone vale now dividing,
Whither away?
'With pilgrim course I flow,
Or in summer's scorching glow,
Or o'er moonless wastes of snow,
Nor stop nor stay;
For, oh, by high behest,
To a bright abode of rest
In my parent Ocean's breast
I hasten away!'

2

Many a dark morass,
Many a craggy mass,
Thy feeble force must pass;
Yet, yet delay!
'Tho' the marsh be dire and deep,
Tho' the crag be stern and steep,
On, on, my course must sweep,
I may not stay;
For oh, be it east or west,
To a home of glorious rest
In the bright sea's boundless breast,
I hasten away!'

3

The warbling bowers beside thee,
The laughing flowers that hide thee,
With soft accord they chide thee,
Sweet brooklet, stay!
'I taste of the fragrant flowers,
I respond to the warbling bowers,
And sweetly they charm the hours
Of my winding way;

But ceaseless still, in quest
Of that everlasting rest,
In my parent's boundless breast,
I hasten away!'

4

Knowest thou that dread abyss?
Is it a scene of bliss?
Ah, rather cling to this,
Sweet brooklet, stay!
'Oh who shall fitly tell
What wonders there may dwell?—
That world of mystery well
Might strike dismay;
But I know 'tis my parent's breast,—
There held, I must needs be blest;
And with joy to that promised rest
I hasten away!'

VII.

PSALM II.

1

WHEREFORE do the nations wage
War against the King of kings?
Whence the people's maddening rage,
Fraught with vain imaginings?

2

Haughty chiefs and rulers proud
Forth in banded fury run,
Braving, with defiance loud,
God and His anointed Son:

3

'Let us break their bonds in twain!
Let us cast their cords away!'—
But the Highest with disdain
Sees and mocks their vain array.

4

'High on Zion I prepare'
(Thus He speaks) 'a regal throne,
Thou My Prince, My chosen heir,
Rise to claim it as Thine own!

5

'Son of God, with God the same,
Enter Thine imperial dome!
Lo! the shaking heavens proclaim,
Mightiest Lord, Thy kingdom come.

6

'Pomp or state dost Thou demand?
In Thy Father's glory shine!
Dost Thou ask for high command?
Lo! the universe is Thine!'—

7

Ye who spurn His righteous sway,
  Yet, ah yet, He spares your breath;
Yet His hand, averse to slay,
  Balances the bolt of death.

8

Ere that dreadful bolt descends,
  Haste before His feet to fall,
Kiss the sceptre He extends,
  And adore Him, Lord of all!

VIII.

PSALM XIX.

(This is intended as a sequel or counterpart to the well-known hymn, 'The Spacious Firmament;' and corresponds to the latter portion of the 19th Psalm, as that hymn does to the former.)

I

THE starry firmament on high,
And all the glories of the sky,
Yet shine not to Thy praise, O Lord,
So brightly as Thy written word:
The hopes that holy word supplies,
Its truths divine and precepts wise—
In each a heavenly beam I see,
And every beam conducts to Thee.

2

When, taught by painful proof to know
That all is vanity below,
The sinner roams from comfort far,
And looks in vain for sun or star,
Soft gleaming then those lights divine
Through all the cheerless darkness shine,
And sweetly to his ravished eye
Disclose the day-spring from on high.

3

The heart in sensual fetters bound,
And barren as the wintry ground,
Confesses, Lord, Thy quickening ray;—
Thy word can charm the spell away,
With genial influence can beguile
The frozen wilderness to smile;
Bid living waters o'er it flow,
And all be paradise below.

4

Almighty Lord! the sun shall fail,
The moon forget her nightly tale,
And deepest silence hush on high
The radiant chorus of the sky;
But, fixed for everlasting years,
Unmoved amid the wreck of spheres
Thy word shall shine in cloudless day,
When heaven and earth have passed away.

IX.

PSALM XLIX.

1

WITH musings sad my spirit teems,
My harp is strung to saddest themes;
O mortal, hear its notes complain,
Nor shun a dark but faithful strain
Whose simple length, tho' short, shall span
The mournful history of man.

2

How oft, with dreams of pomp elate,
The rich upbuilds his haughty state,
With eager fondness counts his gains,
And proudly names his wide domains;
While, left to poverty and scorn,
The just in humble silence mourn!

3

Yet envy not the pomp, ye just,
That towers upon a base of dust:
For oh, when death decreed shall come
To shake the proud man's lofty dome,
Will proffered gold avail to save?
Or ransoms bribe the yawning grave?

4

Lo, stretched before his anguished eyes,
A child, a wife, a brother lies;
How vain his stores, his cares how vain,
The fleeting spirit to retain!
The form he clasps resigns its breath,
And fills his blank embrace with death.

5

Again it strikes,—a second blow,—
The man of pride himself is low:
Shall wealth, shall state, attend the dead?
'Tis only to his clay-cold bed.
Caressed by crowds, by hundreds known,
He fills the narrow house alone.

6

The funeral pomp, superb and slow,
The gorgeous pageantry of woe,
The praise that fills th' historic roll,—
Can these assist the parted soul?
Or will remembered grandeur cheer
The shivering, lonely traveller?

7

And when that breathless, wasting clay
Again shall feel the life-blood play,
When on the cell, where dark it lies,
A morn of piercing light shall rise,
Oh whither then shall guilt retire,
Or how avoid the eyes of fire?

8

Oh man, with heaven's own honours bright,
And fallest thou thus, thou child of light?
And still shall heirs on heirs anew
The melancholy jest pursue?
And, born the offspring of the sky,
In folly live, in darkness die?

9

But I on Thee depend, O Lord,
My hope, my help, and high reward ;
Thy word illumes my feeble eyes ;
Thy spirit all my strength supplies ;
In sickness Thou my aid shalt be,
And death but gives me all to Thee !

X.

PSALM LXXI.

1

WITH years oppressed, with sorrows worn,
Dejected, harassed, sick, forlorn,
To Thee, O God, I pray :
To Thee my withered hands arise,
To Thee I lift these failing eyes,
O! cast me not away !

2

Thy mercy heard my infant prayer,
Thy love, with all a mother's care,
Sustained my childish days :
Thy goodness watched my ripening youth,
And formed my heart to love Thy truth,
And filled my lips with praise.

3

O Saviour ! has Thy grace declined ?
Can years affect th' Eternal Mind ?
Or time its love decay ?—
A thousand ages pass Thy sight,
And all their long and weary flight
Is gone like yesterday.

4

Then, even in age and grief, Thy name
Shall still my languid heart inflame,
And bow my faltering knee :
Oh ! yet this bosom feels the fire,
This trembling hand and drooping lyre
Have yet a strain for Thee !

5

Yes ! broken, tuneless, still, O Lord,
This voice transported shall record
Thy goodness tried so long ;
Till, sinking slow, with calm decay
Its feeble murmurs melt away
Into a seraph's song !

XI.

PART OF PSALM LXXXIV.

(IMITATED.)

1

How deep the joy, Almighty Lord,
Thy altars to the heart afford !
With envying eyes I see
The swallow fly to nestle there,
And find within the house of prayer
A bliss denied to me !

2

Compelled by day to roam for food
Where scorching suns or tempests rude
Their angry influence fling,
Oh, gladly in that sheltered nest
She smooths, at eve, her ruffled breast,
And folds her weary wing.

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3

Thrice happy wand'rer ! fain would I,
Like thee, from ruder climates fly,
That seat of rest to share ;
Opprest with tumult, sick with wrongs,
How oft my fainting spirit longs
To lay its sorrows there !

4

Oh ! ever on that holy ground
The cov'ring cherub Peace is found,
With brooding wings serene ;
And Charity's seraphic glow,
And gleams of glory that foreshow
A higher, brighter scene.

5

For even that refuge but bestows
A transient tho' a sweet repose,
For one short hour allowed ;—
Then, upwards we shall take our flight
To hail a spring without a blight,
A heaven without a cloud !

XII.

PSALM CIV.

1

O WORSHIP the King
All glorious above,
O gratefully sing
His power and His love—
Our shield and defender,
The ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendour,
And girded with praise.

2

Oh tell of His might,
O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light,
Whose canopy space.

His chariots of wrath
  Deep thunder-clouds form,
And dark is His path
  On the wings of the storm.

3

This earth, with its store
  Of wonders untold,
Almighty! Thy power
  Hath founded of old;
Hath 'stablished it fast
  By a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast,
  Like a mantle, the sea.

4

Thy bountiful care
  What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
  It shines in the light:
It streams from the hills,
  It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
  In the dew and the rain.

5

Frail children of dust,
And feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust,
Nor find Thee to fail:
Thy mercies how tender!
How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend!

6

O measureless might!
Ineffable Love!
While angels delight
To hymn Thee above,
The humbler creation,
Tho' feeble their lays,
With true adoration
Shall lisp to Thy praise!

APPENDIX.

PAGE 1.

THIS hymn was first published by the author in the following form :—

1

WHEN gath'ring clouds around I view,
And days are dark and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who not in vain
Experienced every human pain ;
He feels my griefs, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

2

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To fly the good I would pursue,
And do the sin I would not do—
Still He who felt temptation's power
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour.

3

If wounded love my bosom swell,
Deceived by those I prized too well,—
He shall His pitying aid bestow
Who felt on earth severer woe,
At once betrayed, denied, or fled
By those who shared His daily bread.

4

When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend
Which covers all that was a friend,
And from his voice, his hand, his smile,
Divides me—for a little while;
Thou, Saviour, markest the tears I shed,
For Thou didst weep o'er Lazarus dead.

5

When vexing thoughts within me rise,
And sore dismayed my spirit dies,
When writhing on the bed of pain
I supplicate for rest in vain,
Still, still my soul shall think on Thee,
Thy bloody sweat and agony.

6

And oh, when I have safely past
Through every conflict—but the last,
Wilt Thou who once for me hast bled—
In all my sickness make my bed?—
Then bear me to that happier shore,
Where Thou shalt mark my woes no more.

Subsequently the author published another copy of the hymn, which is the same with that in the text; but as some persons may prefer the earlier edition, I have thought it better to insert it here.

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